



RESEARCH PAPER

Young Women's Changing Attitudes towards Privacy in Blogging with Age and Experience in Pakistan

¹Komal Masood* and ²Shahyan Qamar

1. Lecturer, Media and Communication Studies Department, National University of Modern Languages, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Lecturer, Department of Applied Psychology, National University of Modern Languages, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author:** komalmasoodshams@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the changing perception of privacy in blog writing among young women. The growth in social media and the number of web pages, and blogs evolved from online diaries and journals in the mid-90s. People preferably started using blogs to publish regular updates about their personal lives, thoughts, and social commentary. The researcher explored the perception of women on privacy through a questionnaire by using a descriptive research design. The data was collected from 171 young women and results revealed that women in the age range 27-31 show more concern about privacy and women with 7 years and more blog writing experience are more concerned about privacy in blog writing. It concluded that women with more age and more experience in blog writing are aware of privacy concerns as compared to younger ones. Further studies can focus on parameters to manage privacy concerns in blog writing.

KEYWORDS Awareness, Blog, Experience, Female Bloggers, Privacy

Introduction

With technological advancement where the world has now become a global village, social media is emerging very rapidly (Srinivasan, 2018). Social media plays a vital role in transforming people's life style. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other. Online discussion platforms are used to engage people in collective reflection, exchanging perspectives and cross-cultural understanding (Baruah, 2012). Blogs are one source of information where updated content in terms of text, pictures, sound files, videos and much more are posted on a regular basis and displayed in reverse chronological order to grab the attention of the people and to spread awareness in the society (Rettberg, 2014). Through Blog, people have the opportunity to exchange their ideas with each other because bloggers provide the option for readers to comment on their blogs which will be uniquely identified with the link (Li, 2005). These comments are named as 'Blog roll'. Blogosphere is a hub where different blogs are interlinked at a one platform. There are a number of researches which are being conducted on the importance and impacts of Blogs (Sharman, 2014). According to a survey conducted in 2007 to extract the number of emerging blogs from the directory, it is observed that there are 50 to 85 million blogs working all over. Socio- demographical statistics states that majority of the blogs are created based on the personal experience. Blogs are a useful source to evoke the solidarity among the nations and to promote diverse cultural sustainability because blogs provide a chance for the people to share shared interest (Pühringer & Taylor, 2008). Blog readers are somewhat more of a mainstream group than bloggers themselves. Like bloggers, blog readers are more likely to be young, male, female, well educated, internet veterans (Rettberg, 2014). It has been observed through various studies that women and teenagers are running most of the blogs. Young women use social media and blogs to talk about different issues of the society (Mazur & Kozarian, 2010). Age has a great impact on women's attitude towards blogs. With the increase in age women become guarded towards their talk, their way of thinking changes as they gain experience

in the relevant field (Greenberg et al., 2013). Teenagers and women are eagerly involved in creating an online discussion platform and managing their social relations with peers through an array of tools for interpersonal communication among them blogs as it is becoming a global challenge to discover dynamic ways of innovative communication patterns by adopting new technologies (Schmidt, 2007).

Blogs are widely available tools that gives an opportunity to everyone having the Internet access to share their thoughts with the world (Yang, 2009). A blog can show proficient dangers, especially if the data is exceptionally secretive, judgmental, passionate or inadequately altered. Bloggers have to be very careful while posting any of the inflammatory material because it could damage their professional information as well as it can cause the breach of information (Stoller, 2018). Sometimes if the personal data breaches could lead to the risks beyond possible inconvenience especially to those bloggers who are using the blog sites for the business purposes (Hill, 2005). For this purpose, there are cases when bloggers use anonymity feature to express their thoughts so that it could not effect on their personal life and their reputation will not be compromised due to exposure, as staying safe is a wise decision for any blogger rather than changing the name. Blogging puts you at risk from harassers who not only will ruin the experience of blogging, but could also put your safety at risk (McCullagh, 2008). There are high chances of risks, security threats and harassments mostly occur in the case of the females when they share their experiences and thoughts openly (Mitchell et al., 2008). Bloggers have the ability to make an impact on the lives of the people and to create the image of a brand about which they are blogging, so their privacy matters a lot (Rettberg, 2014). According to the study conducted on the LiveJournal, it has been reported by the Bloggers that they are facing some privacy issues in terms of the content posted on Blogs. New Blogging practices and privacy practices are emerging for the liability of the Blogs. Since the social interaction is growing on the Blog sites, inherent privacy risks are also emerging very rapidly to the data transparency (Viégas, 2005). Privacy are of three types which are; Informational Privacy, Accessibility Privacy and Expressive Privacy. Informational privacy is about securing one's data from all sorts of means so that it could not be used by any person and cannot be exploited through any means. Accessibility Privacy is more of a physical harm in which a person could be easily accessed by any other person who can cause harm to him in terms of violation or harassment. Expressive Privacy is concerned with social freedom and movement of a person to explicitly move around in the society under the social pressure of norms and judgments (Tavani, 2008). Expressive Information could be shared by a blogger in the form of identity information, emotional statements, relationship opinions, financial information, work information, health information, political, religious information and legal information (Child et al., 2009).

Bloggers use self-expression on blogs for self-reflection. A person's self is developed by the social and cultural interaction and the atmosphere. Due to the social interaction by brainstorming the modern ideas, new ways of communication is emerged (Deng & Yuen, 2011).

Literature Review

According to Viégas (2005), blogs are commonly known as weblogs which are currently becoming famous and social trend in the modern society. A survey on blogs reveal that 37% females use blogs and their age ranges between 21-30 years old and all those women are well literate. Blog writers and readers are increasing continually. There are wide range of topics on which bloggers blog about such as social, political, personal, education, beauty, awareness and so on. As number of bloggers are increasing people are getting actively conscious about the risks which are involved while blogging mainly focuses on privacy. Bloggers have the influential role in the society, whatever they talk about has a strong impact on the lives of the people. When bloggers blog about some issues, they might publish such material on the blog that could not be acceptable for the people having different mindsets.

A study found that bloggers who does not do much research have no idea about the privacy issues which they could face while posting any personal content on the blog. Sometimes they do not do enough research that they do not get an idea about the interests of the people and sometimes publish the content which is unacceptable for the society such as sexual content posted by a women on the blog openly which is completely unacceptable for the people living in an Eastern society (Amir-Ebrahimi, 2008).

According to Huffaker & Calvert (2005), gender and age plays a major role in blogging. Most of the bloggers are teenagers and as they get older they become more conscious of the things which they blog about, due to explorations of new things and various learning experiences. Due to security that their data on blogs are not safe they hide their identity and their content is easily available on all over the world through the internet. In this research they have found that 56% of bloggers are female who working world wide and 44% are male. They have developed a new feature in which authors can post anything anonymously that helps the bloggers to share information without any precautions. Anonymity factor has gave a free space to the bloggers to share their views about various things without modifying the original ideas.

It has been observed in a research that bloggers who use their names anonymously are more likely introvert. It is their choice to reveal their identity and provide personal information. On the other hand mostly bloggers share their personal information, details of their lives with those who are interested in them. This shows an extrovert personality of bloggers. Bloggers conversation and communication is also effected by the personality type. Also In this research they have figured out that most of the bloggers are females and they are in their teenage. Gender plays an important role in blogs topics, information, details and writing style. The third component that impact on the information on blogs is age. Age brings awareness and experience in bloggers, through experience bloggers become conscious. (Nowson & Oberlander, 2006)

Theoretical Framework

Social Development Theory stresses on the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition. (Vygotsky, 1978) Vygotsky argued, "Learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function".

Material and Methods

A quantitative research design was used to conduct this study on young female bloggers to find out their perception and awareness about the privacy. A snowball sampling technique was used to find the rare sample of the female bloggers among the university students. A consent was taken from the participants before giving them the questionnaire. The data was collected from 171 women (Teenage to adult Bloggers). The participants of this particular research include specifically female bloggers or participants of blogs who are currently studying in the University. Women's awareness is measured with the frequency of their blog posts. Women's awareness depending on their educational level and environmental structure in which they are living in the society. Every female blogger has her own experience through which she sets her beliefs about something. As female bloggers get more involved in blogging with time and age, they get to know the depth of blogging realities that makes them conscious about posting personal content on blogs. All ethical consideration including confidentiality, protection of the participants were followed throughout the study. For the analysis of the collected data from the survey questionnaires, SPSS software has been used.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study describe the awareness of the women about the privacy in blogging according to their age and experience.

Table 1
Frequency and percentage of Age of the Participants

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
17-20	21	12.3
21-23	78	45.6
24-27	57	33.3
28-31	15	8.8

Table 2
Cronbach Alpha Reliability of Women Awareness Scale

Variable	K	α
Women Awareness Scale	10	.82

One-way Analysis of Variance

Table 3
One-way Analysis of Variance of Blogging Duration of the Participant on Awareness Scale in University Students

Variables	Blogging Duration								<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
	0-1 year (n=53)		2-4 years (n=47)		5-6 years (n=29)		7 or more (n=42)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
AS	32.69	11.92	36.01	12.99	42.62	8.17	43.48	5.57	7.54	.001***

Note. $p < .001$ ***, *M*= Mean, *SD*= Standard Deviation, AS= Awareness Scale

The above table showed that there is a significant difference on blogging duration of the participant in awareness scale of the university students. The duration range 7 or more shows more awareness as compare to other groups.

Table 4
One-way Analysis of Variance of Age of the Participant on Awareness Scale in University Students

Variables	Age								<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
	17- 20 year (n=21)		21-23 years (n=78)		24-27 years (n=57)		28-31 years (n=15)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
AS	33.14	10.85	37.06	12.51	36.01	12.05	44.66	4.32	3.04	.03*

Note. $p < .05$ *, *M*= Mean, *SD*= Standard Deviation, AS= Awareness Scale

The findings of this study revealed significant age difference that people belong to age range 28-31 have more awareness about privacy in blog writing as compared to other age groups.

The purpose of this study was to find out that how many female bloggers are aware of the growing issues of privacy on the blogging platforms and at which level they get to know these privacy concerns. It was assumed by the common perception that the experienced female bloggers are more aware of the privacy concerns than less experienced female bloggers. In this research, it was observed that those females who have almost started blogging may not know the privacy concerns a lot and experienced females have more knowledge of the issues that can occurs in terms of privacy. Culture also plays an

important role in creating the awareness of privacy among women. It has been observed that those females who has blogger friends are more likely to do blogging and they are well aware from privacy issues that can occur on social media websites, because their peers are already experienced those and now they have a shared set of experiences with expert pieces of advice.

The findings showed that most of the female bloggers choose to be anonymous while doing blogging because they are more prone to the harassment using their original identities so they find it safe. Another study conducted by Greenberg et al. (2013) reported that women of young age are not concern about the privacy while writing a blog but with the passage of time when their age grow they guarded their talk and consider more about the privacy while writing a blog. Age and experience have great influence on the privacy concern while writing a blog. A study conducted by Huffaker & Calvert (2005) also reported that age and experience change the perception of the women while writing a blog. With the passage of time they learned that information posted on the internet is not private and their information can be assess by everyone. This leads to privacy concern and they limit their information on blogs.

Conclusions

The research was conducted to find the awareness about privacy among female bloggers in Pakistan. The findings showed that those female bloggers who have the know-how of technology and are well literate seemed to be more aware of the issues of privacy. The more experienced women are more aware about the privacy issues while blogging as compared to less experienced ones. Awareness level of privacy in terms of blogging are also higher in women higher age category as compared to young women. It has also been observed from the findings, female bloggers have a perception that by blogging anonymously, they can secure their repute. But, it is the need of the hour to create the awareness among female bloggers, even if they are blogging anonymously, their data and identity can be easily accessed by the people. It was interesting to note that blogging is contributing immensely for the women to share their thoughts and ideas freely which they do not have the right to share sometimes in this society and due to cultural norms and values.

References

- Amir-Ebrahimi, M. (2008). Transgression in narration: The lives of Iranian women in cyberspace. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 4(3), 89-118.
- Baruah, T. D. (2012). Effectiveness of Social Media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study. *International journal of scientific and research publications*, 2(5), 1-10.
- Child, J. T., Pearson, J. C., & Petronio, S. (2009). Blogging, communication, and privacy management: Development of the blogging privacy management measure. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 60(10), 2079-2094.
- Deng, L., & Yuen, A. H. (2011). Towards a framework for educational affordances of blogs. *Computers & education*, 56(2), 441-451.
- Greenberg, S., Yaari, E., & Bar-Ilan, J. (2013, January). Perceived credibility of blogs on the internet—the influence of age on the extent of criticism. In *Aslib Proceedings* (Vol. 65, No. 1, pp. 4-18). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Hill, J. (2005). *The voice of the blog: the attitudes and experiences of small business bloggers using blogs as a marketing and communications tool*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Liverpool: The University of Liverpool.
- Huffaker, D. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2005). Gender, identity, and language use in teenage blogs. *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 10(2), JCMC10211.
- Li, D. (2005). *Why do you blog: A uses-and-gratifications inquiry into bloggers' motivations* (Vol. 17). Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University.
- Mazur, E., & Kozarian, L. (2010). Self-presentation and interaction in blogs of adolescents and young emerging adults. *Journal of adolescent research*, 25(1), 124-144.
- McCullagh, K. (2008). Blogging: self presentation and privacy. *Information & communications technology law*, 17(1), 3-23.
- Mitchell, K. J., Wolak, J., & Finkelhor, D. (2008). Are blogs putting youth at risk for online sexual solicitation or harassment?. *Child abuse & neglect*, 32(2), 277-294.
- Nowson, S., & Oberlander, J. (2006, March). The Identity of Bloggers: Openness and Gender in Personal Weblogs. In *AAAI spring symposium: Computational approaches to analyzing weblogs* (pp. 163-167).
- Pühringer, S., & Taylor, A. (2008). A practitioner's report on blogs as a potential source of destination marketing intelligence. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 14(2), 177-187.
- Rettberg, J. W. (2014). *Blogging*. Polity. Cambridge
- Sharman, A. (2014). Mapping the climate sceptical blogosphere. *Global Environmental Change*, 26, 159-170.
- Srinivasan, R. (2018). *Whose global village?: Rethinking how technology shapes our world*. NYU Press.
- Stoller, P. (2018). *Adventures in blogging: Public anthropology and popular media*. University of Toronto Press.
- Tavani, H. T. (2008). Informational privacy: Concepts, theories, and controversies. *The handbook of information and computer ethics*, 131-164.

- Viégas, F. B. (2005). Bloggers' expectations of privacy and accountability: An initial survey. *Journal of computer-mediated communication, 10*(3), JCMC10310.
- Yang, S. H. (2009). Using blogs to enhance critical reflection and community of practice. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 12*(2), 11-21.